

August 4, 2021

Bark River, MI 49807

MICRC
PO Box 30318
Lansing, MI 48909

MICRD,

This letter asks a question about the current opportunity for citizens to “draw districts” online, and shares a concern about its purpose.

My question is: What is the purpose of our district drawing? The website provides guidance on “how” to draw and submit drawings, but not “why”. How is our input going to be used?

The easy guess is that citizen input is required by state policy, but that the committee is free to treat the input only as a recommendation. But maybe our input is the kind of requirement that binds the committee’s hands. Or might the drawings have a purpose independent of the Committee?

The reason this matters is that if citizens do not know the purpose of their submissions by definition they will not address the committee’s intentions. Transparency is better than non-transparency.

It is curious that the commission, the members of which were chosen for valid reasons, would turn to persons not so chosen. Equally curious is that the commission would seek information from citizens that relevant experts already possess.

The desire to make districts participatory and meaningful is understandable, but I claim that it is dangerous for citizens to submit favored groupings.

The reason is that solidifying citizen groupings only divides citizens into “us” and “them”. Obviously districts should be drawn to stop rent-seeking by established electoral parties, but of equal importance is that districts should be drawn to prevent citizen tribalization.

Consider two ways to group citizens: by natural attributes like race, age or gender; and by social attributes, like income level, education level, or religion. My claim is that districts drawn by these considerations are unjust.

Fortunately, a third way to group citizens is permissible: by their most recent vote. The sole legitimate purpose for drawing districts is to enable electoral choice. Electoral districts need only organize voting booths for a particular electoral contest. Legitimate district borders need only enable a clear and effective decision settlement.

Personal social aims are important but should be served by private (non-electoral) efforts and associations. To have electoral districts try to reflect (and then ossify) natural or social groupings is toxic. Natural and social grouping should remain fully irrelevant to electoral organization.

Democracy is about expressing and comparing competing arguments about candidates and potential policy. Citizens need to talk to each other. Thus the proper standard of district organization is to simply cut the transaction costs of citizen political speech. Districts need only be as round (or N-sided) as possible and of as equal population as possible.

Citizens are free to move to a different electoral district if they find themselves in a district that overly burdens their social aims or what they consider their natural fit.

As a final and separate matter, I can share a suggestion for how districts could be drawn.

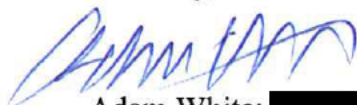
Make borders adaptive rather than static. Each election cycle shift adjacent small zones (say wards) between adjacent electoral districts as necessary to make the next election more competitive in both districts. For example, districts that voted overwhelmingly liberal would switch liberal wards on their physical edge to the adjacent more conservative district.


The idea behind continual border optimization is twofold. First, voter turnout is higher in competitive districts than in less competitive districts. The reason is that votes (and political speech) matter more when an election is competitive rather than noncompetitive. Second, competitive districts elect more moderate legislators than do noncompetitive districts.

One implication of this view is that "one citizen one vote" is too simple: justice also requires that the *influence* of each citizen's vote be as equal as possible. This requires that all districts be as uniformly competitive as possible.

I appreciate the opportunity to participate and give feedback in this important process. Thank you for your attention and open mind.

Sincerely,



Adam White; 

MICRC
P. O. Box 30318
Lansing MI 48909

Aug. 25, 2021

Dear Ms or Sir

Enclosed is a copy of a map for a community of interest in Washtenaw County, named "Wider
Broadway Area," as well as a one-page word description of that community of interest.

On the map, the area of the community of interest is shown in light blue. The map itself shows
part of the city of Ann Arbor. The map was drawn with methods provided by
REPRESENTABLE.ORG. A pdf copy could be sent to you, if you provided me with an email
address.



Kenneth F. Koral

[REDACTED]
Ann Arbor, MI 48105
[REDACTED]

Wider Broadway Area

This map was created at [Representable.org](https://www.representable.org)

View this community at:

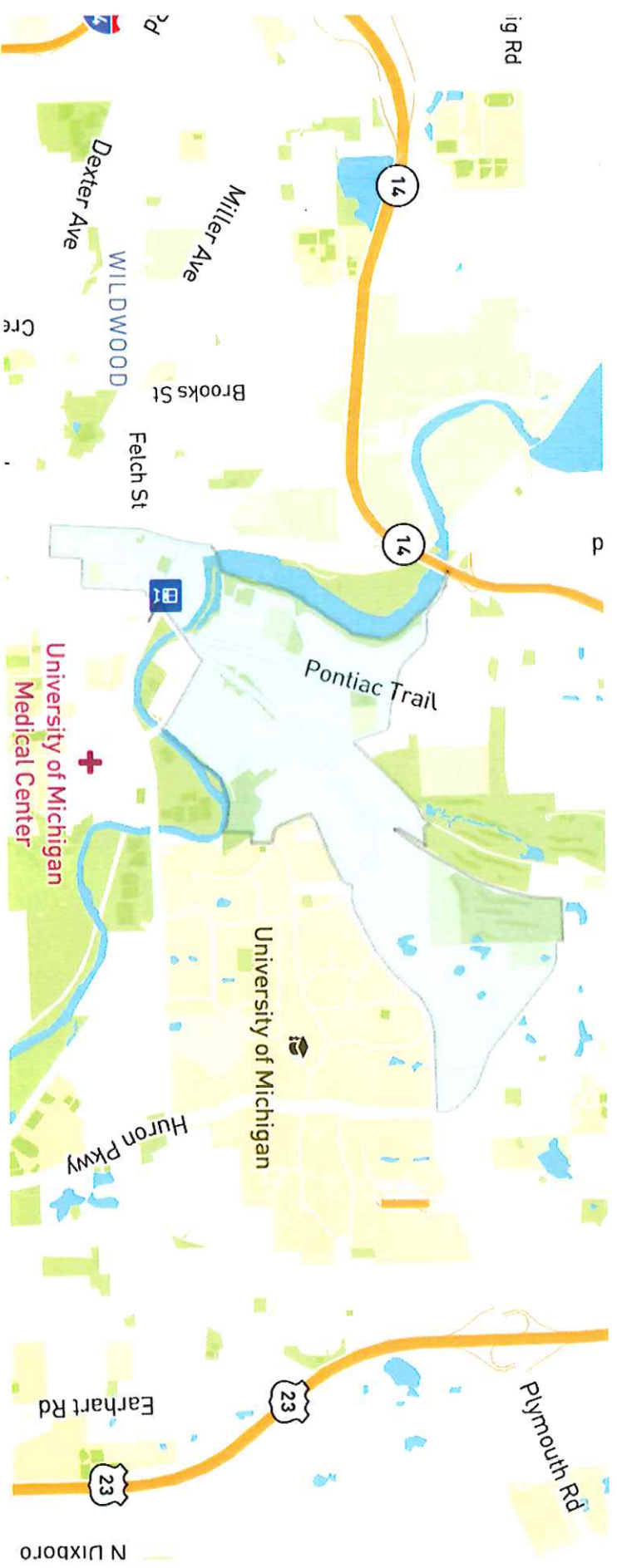
<https://www.representable.org/submission/thanks/abc0c5d9-31da-48a1-a42a-141aa7acadd0/mi>



Wider Broadway Area

This map was created at [Representable.org](https://www.representable.org)

View this community at:
<https://www.representable.org/submission/thanks/abc0c5d9-31da-48a1-a42a-141aa7ac>



Wider Broadway Area

This community of interest is centered geographically around the Broadway Historic District in Ann Arbor to some extent. Importantly, it encompasses that neighborhood and nearby neighborhoods that have similar characteristics and similar interests.

Among other things, the residents have strong interests in their housing and the appearance of their streets. The houses themselves have a variety of ages from century homes to newly built infill duplexes, for example. However, they are well maintained to a large extent. There are many flower gardens on the tree lawns. Most yards may not be pristine but are neatly kept.

The residents also have strong interests in surrounding commercial districts that enable the residents to have a sense of neighborhood. One can walk to those commercial districts in many cases, or certainly drive to them in a short amount of time.

The commercial districts which are included are those which are quite close to the residential area and are important to the residents of the community of interest. They do not include commercial districts which are important to the entire city of Ann Arbor, but which are more removed from the housing included. However, it is to be admitted that at least one of the included commercial areas also does have importance to the rest of the city of Ann Arbor.

When the Broadway Historic District itself was formed, there was at least one occupant on each of the streets that were included who signed a petition in favor of the district. The neighbors who had some misgivings about the pros of being part of a district relative to the cons uniformly demurred from speaking out publicly against its formation, apparently trusting to the wisdom of those who were in favor of it.

The boundaries of the district use both natural features like the Huron River and man-made ones like two state business routes as they cut through Ann Arbor as well as the edge of the North Campus student district of the University of Michigan.

Village of Grosse Pointe Shores, A Michigan City

RESOLUTION REGARDING DECENNIAL REDISTRICTING

WHEREAS, the U.S. Constitution calls for a decennial Census of the population of the country and a reapportionment of representatives to the United States House of Representatives;

WHEREAS, upon completion of the Census every 10 years, states are required to approve new districts for the U.S. House of Representative as well as state office districts for state representatives and state senators;

WHEREAS, the citizens of the State of Michigan have established a Redistricting Commission to undertake the development and approval of redistricting plans based on the 2020 Census, and to take effect starting in 2022;

WHEREAS, the U.S. Supreme Court and the Michigan Constitution have established principles that the redistricting process must meet;

WHEREAS, redistricting plans are required to follow principles of being compact, contiguous, respecting borders of municipalities and natural geographic features, respecting minority voter rights to representation, and keeping communities with similar interests together;

WHEREAS, the six small municipalities consisting of the Grosse Pointes and Harper Woods comprise all of the suburban communities of the northeastern corner of Wayne County and a tiny part of Macomb County;

WHEREAS, the citizens of all of the Grosse Pointes and Harper Woods have lived for decades as one community sharing a multitude of services including one public school system serving all of the Grosse Pointes and a portion of Harper Woods, shared mutual aid for police and fire, and many other services and expenses forming a single community of interest;

WHEREAS, the redistricting plan in place for the last decade divided this community of interest into two districts: State District 1 consisting of Grosse Pointe Shores, Grosse Pointe Woods, Harper Woods, and a neighboring part of Detroit, and State District 2 consisting of Grosse Pointe Farms, Grosse Pointe City, Grosse Pointe Park, and a portion of Detroit, two State Senate districts, and a Congressional district stretching in convoluted fashion all the way to Pontiac;

WHEREAS, division of the Grosse Pointes and Harper Woods into multiple legislative districts does not respect the long-established redistricting principle to draw elected representatives' district boundaries to respect communities of interest;

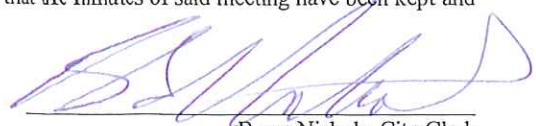
AND WHEREAS, redistricting should allow a long-time combined community, its residents, businesses, infrastructure, and the community as a whole, to be represented together to have an effective and unified voice in Lansing and Washington, D.C.;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Village of Grosse Pointe Shores, A Michigan City requests the Michigan Redistricting Commission approve a redistricting plan keeping Grosse Pointe and its neighbors in the same state and federal legislative districts, and that a copy of this resolution be immediately provided to the members of the Michigan Restricting Commission for their consideration.

AYES: 5
NAYS: 1
ABSENT: 1

STATE OF MICHIGAN
VILLAGE OF GROSSE POINTE SHORES, A MICHIGAN CITY

I hereby certify that this resolution is a true and complete copy of the action taken by the City Council of the Village of Grosse Pointe Shores, A Michigan City, County of Wayne, County of Macomb, State of Michigan, at a meeting held on August 17, 2021, and that public notice of said meeting was given pursuant with Act No. 267, Public Acts of Michigan 1976, and that the minutes of said meeting have been kept and made available to the public as required by said Act.


Bruce Nichols, City Clerk
Village of Grosse Pointe Shores, A Michigan City

Dear Commission,

I am pleased to be able to give some input about the important job that you are doing. I feel very strongly that redistricting is vital to Michigan. Voting is a cornerstone of democracy and it needs to be fair and unbiased in how it is organized.

I can't imagine how to do the task that you are undertaking and so I appreciate your willingness to be on the commission.

My feedback is to request that the redistricting be fair; socially, racially and income based as well as any other category that isn't coming to mind right now. The new districts need to take into account social justice and fairness with politics being completely out of the district lines that you draw. The true will of the people, the majority, needs to be heard, not manipulated.

Thank you again,
Vicki Zuker
Norton Shores, MI

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Vicki Zuker".

#2 - MICRC Mtg
8.26.21 @ 5pm - 8
Session

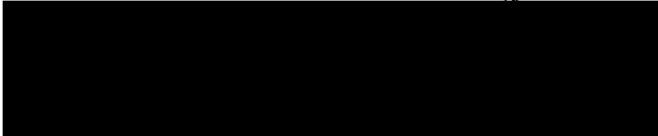
Thank you, commissioners, for the chance to speak, and for all your work.

Michigan passed a constitutional amendment in 2018 removing the redrawing of election districts from the legislature and putting it in the hands of an independent commission. Michigan has been subjected to gerrymandering including in the recent past. Michigan's citizens deserve the right to have their vote counted, no matter where they live. I urge you to draw districts that do not lead to one party rule in any district – that includes the current first congressional district, as well as districts for the State House and the State Senate. I would like to see maps drawn with as close to zero partisanship as possible.

I also want to note the communities of interest along the northern Michigan coast. We do share tourism, fruit growing, water-directed activities, fishing and sometimes medical care, transportation and intermediate school districts. For example, our State senate district could follow the northern coast of lower Michigan and encompass many communities of interest as above. Our state house district could pair the northern Grand Traverse county with Leelanau county and encompass wine growers, fruit growers, mass transport, medical care and intermediate school district (and tourism); Our congressional district would add the water related communities of the Upper Peninsula

On another note, I was very disappointed that the MICRC chose a partisan law firm who will represent this body in any lawsuits. I feel we should have looked harder for a nonpartisan firm.

Barbara Conley
Northport
Leelanau County



Members of the Michigan Redistricting Commission:

I live in Leelanau County, a peninsula that adjoins only two other counties, Grand Traverse and Benzie Counties. I was one of the many volunteers who worked for Voters Not Politicians in gathering signatures for the citizens' initiative that led to the formation of your Commission. I urge you to reject any effort to simply modify the current gerrymandered district boundaries and to establish entirely new State House and State Senate districts without regard to political composition.

A part of Leelanau County is already within the city limits of Traverse City. Our county has changed over the last ten years as most new residents are retirees seeking new lives "Up North". I believe the average age of our population is now the oldest in the state. Like many others, my wife and I go to Traverse City once or twice a week for medical care, to shop, to dine out, to use the Cherry Capital Airport, and to enjoy the many cultural benefits that are only available to us in Traverse City. We get most of our daily news from the *Traverse City Record-Eagle* and the local television and radio stations, all of

which are based in Traverse City. We believe the elderly population of Leelanau County has so much in common with Traverse City, that the two should be considered one community of interest.

Leelanau County is also heavily dependent on agriculture with many acres of our rural land devoted to production of cherries, apples, and wine grapes. There are many wineries located in Leelanau County that sell most of their wine in Traverse City stores. In this instance, most of Leelanau County's farmers share this industry with farmers growing the same products on Traverse City's Old Mission Peninsula and many tourists visit our area to take winery tours in both the Leelanau and the Old Mission Peninsulas. As a result, the farmers in both Leelanau County and Traverse City should be considered a community of interest and I urge you to draw a new State House District that reflect these realities.

The same factors listed above should also result in a new State Senate District that includes Leelanau, Benzie, Grand Traverse Counties as well as Antrim or Kalkaska

Counties which also identify with Traverse City as the hub of our activities.

Thank you very much for considering my comments.

Jay S. Johnson, Empire, Michigan.

Dear Commissioners - 8/22/21

Please support the redistricting maps submitted by the AFH-LTC. This group has helped workers organize & bargain for better jobs, wages & benefits. Coming from a union family, I benefited from these gains & was able to get an advanced education. Better Dr. D. [redacted] 4/8/16



Post Card
Mi. Redistricting Commission
P.O. Box 30318
Lansing, Mi.
48909

PICTURED ROCKS NATIONAL LAKESHORE - is a rugged shoreline on Lake Superior's south shore between Munising and Grand Marais, Michigan. High bluffs and spectacular rock formations create a dramatic panorama of austere beauty. It is said that Father Marquette preached to Indians, assembled below in canoes, from this promontory, known as Miners Castle.
Photo by John Penrod

